



U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Unmanned Aircraft System MQ-9 Predator B

FACT SHEET

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Office of Air and Marine, or OAM, operates the highly capable and proven Predator B unmanned aircraft system (UAS) in support of law enforcement and homeland security missions at the nation's borders. OAM selected the Predator B, manufactured by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, for its unique combination of operational capabilities, payload capacity, mission flexibility, potential to accommodate new sensor packages, and its safety and performance record with other federal agencies.

The CBP UAS program focuses operations on the CBP priority mission of anti-terrorism by helping to identify and intercept potential terrorists and illegal cross-border activity. The system also supports disaster relief efforts of its Department of Homeland Security partners, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard. The remotely piloted Predator B allows OAM personnel to safely conduct missions in areas that are difficult to access or otherwise too high-risk for manned aircraft or CBP ground personnel.

OAM first employed the Predator B in support of law enforcement operations on the Southwest Border in 2005 and along the Northern Border in 2009. OAM operates three Predator Bs from Libby Army Airfield in Sierra Vista, Arizona; and two from Grand Forks Air Force Base, in North Dakota. OAM also operates a maritime variant UAS, called the Guardian. OAM's two Guardian aircraft fly from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida;

Performance and Weight

- Speed: 240 knots
- Altitude: Up to 50,000 feet
- Endurance: Up to 20 operational hours
- Max Gross Weight: 10,500 pounds

Other System Components

- Fixed and mobile ground control stations
- Electro-optical, Infrared Sensors
- Surface Search Radar/Ground Moving Target Indicator
- Line-of-sight Data and Control Link
- Ku-band Satcom Data and Control Link

and Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas. OAM expects to employ the Predator B throughout the border regions with command and control from a network of ground control stations across the country.

The Predator B's capability to provide high-quality streaming video to first responders, and to assess critical infrastructure before and after events, makes it an ideal aircraft to support emergency preparations and recovery operations. The CBP UAS provided emergency support for the 2008 Atlantic hurricane season and the 2009 and 2010 Red River floods in the Midwest with excellent results.

